Prothalamion

Or

A Spouſall Verſe made by

Edm. Spenſer.

IN HONOVR OF THE DOV-

ble mariage of the two Honorable & vertuous

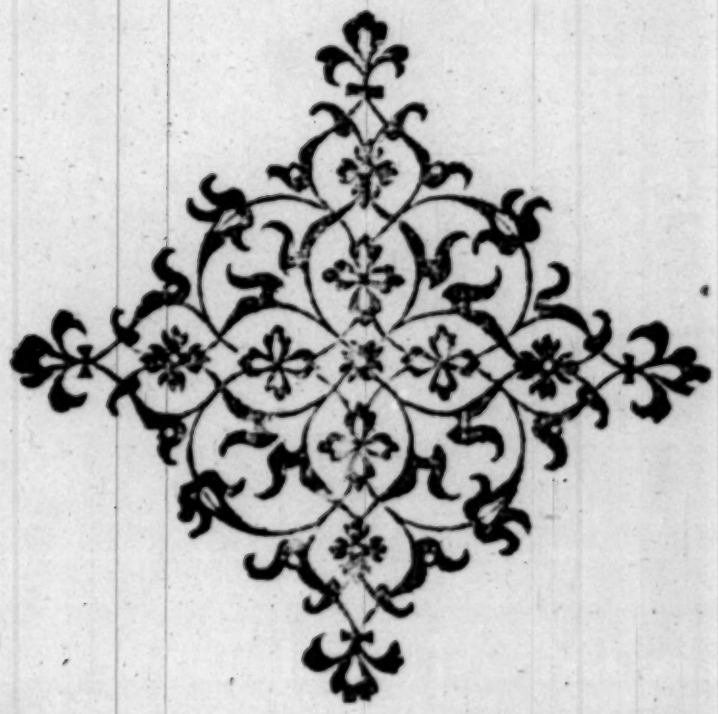
Ladies, the Ladie Elizabeth *and the Ladie* Katherine

Somerſet, Daughters to the Right Honourable the

Earle of *Worceſter* and eſpouſed to the two worthie

Gentlemen M. *Henry Gilford*, and

M. *William Peter* Eſquyers.



AT LONDON.

Printed for *VVilliam Ponſonby.*

1596.

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Prothalamion.

CAlme was the day, and through the trembling ayre,
Sweete breathing *Zephyrus* did ſoftly play
A gentle ſpirit, that lightly did delay
Hot *Titans* beames, which then did glyſter fayre:
When I whom ſullein care,
Through diſcontent of my long fruitleſſe ſtay
In Princes Court, and expectation vayne
Of idle hopes, which ſtill doe fly away,
Like empty ſhaddowes, did aflict my brayne,
Walkt forth to eaſe my payne
Along the ſhoare of ſiluer ſtreaming *Themmes*,
Whoſe rutty Bancke, the which his Riuer hemmes,
Was paynted all with variable flowers,
And all the meades adornd with daintie gemmes,
Fit to decke maydens bowres,
And crowne their Paramours,
Againſt the Brydale day, which is not long:
Sweete *Themmes* runne ſoftly, till I end my Song.

Prothalamion.

There, in a Meadow, by the Riuers ſide,
A Flocke of *Nymphes* I chaunced to eſpy,
All louely Daughters of the Flood thereby,
With goodly greeniſh locks all looſe vntyde,
As each had bene a Bryde,
And each one had a little wicker basket,
Made of fine twigs entrayled curiouſly,
In which they gathered flowers to fill their flasket:
And with fine Fingers, cropt full feateouſly
The tender ſtalkes on hye.
Of euery ſort, which in that Meadow grew,
They gathered ſome; the Violet pallid blew,
The little Dazie, that at euening cloſes,
The virgin Lillie, and the Primroſe trew,
With ſtore of vermeil Roſes,
To decke their Bridegromes poſies,
Againſt the Brydale day, which was not long:
Sweete *Themmes* runne ſoftly, till I end my Song.

Prothalamion.

With that I ſaw two Swannes of goodly hewe,
Come ſoftly ſwimming downe along the Lee;
Two fairer Birds I yet did neuer ſee:
The ſnow which doth the top of *Pindus* ſtrew,
Did neuer whiter ſhew,
Nor *Ioue* himſelfe when he a Swan would be
For loue of *Leda*, whiter did appeare:
Yet *Leda* was they ſay as white as he,
Yet not ſo white as theſe, nor nothing neare;
So purely white they were,
That euen the gentle ſtreame, the which them bare,
Seem'd foule to them, and bad his billowes ſpare
To wet their ſilken feathers, leaſt they might
Soyle their fayre plumes with water not ſo fayre,
And marre their beauties bright,
That ſhone as heauens light,
Againſt their Brydale day, which was not long:
Sweete *Themmes* runne ſoftly, till I end my Song.

Prothalamion.

Eftſoones the *Nymphes*, which now had Flowers their fill,
Ran all in haſte, to ſee that ſiluer brood,
As they came floating on the Chriſtal Flood,
Whom when they ſawe, they ſtood amazed ſtill,
Their wondring eyes to fill,
Them ſeem'd they neuer ſaw a ſight ſo fayre,
Of Fowles ſo louely, that they ſure did deeme
Them heauenly borne, or to be that ſame payre
Which through the Skie draw *Venus* ſiluer Teeme,
For ſure they did not ſeeme
To be begot of any earthly Seede,
But rather Angels or of Angels breede:
Yet were they bred of *Somerſ-heat* they ſay,
In ſweeteſt Seaſon, when each Flower and weede
The earth did freſh aray,
So freſh they ſeem'd as day,
Euen as their Brydale day, which was not long:
Sweete *Themmes* runne ſoftly till I end my Song.

Prothalamion.

Then forth they all out of their baskets drew,
Great ſtore of Flowers, the honour of the field,
That to the ſenſe did fragrant odours yeild,
All which vpon thoſe goodly Birds they threw,
And all the Waues did ſtrew,
That like old *Peneus* Waters they did ſeeme,
When downe along by pleaſant *Tempes* ſhore
Scattred with Flowres, through *Theſſaly* they ſtreeme,
That they appeare through Lillies plenteous ſtore,
Like a Brydes Chamber flore:
Two of thoſe *Nymphes*, meane while, two Garlands bound,
Of freſheſt Flowres which in that Mead they found,
The which preſenting all in trim Array,
Their ſnowie Foreheads therewithall they crownd,
Whil'ſt one did ſing this Lay,
Prepar'd againſt that Day,
Againſt their Brydale day, which was not long:
Sweete *Themmes* runne ſoftly till I end my Song.

Prothalamion.

Ye gentle Birdes, the worlds faire ornament,
And heauens glorie, whom this happie hower
Doth leade vnto your louers blisfull bower,
Ioy may you haue and gentle hearts content
Of your loues couplement:
And let faire *Venus*, that is Queene of loue,
With her heart-quelling Sonne vpon you ſmile,
Whoſe ſmile they ſay, hath vertue to remoue
All Loues diſlike, and friendſhips faultie guile
For euer to aſſoile.
Let endleſſe Peace your ſteadfaſt hearts accord,
And bleſſed Plentie wait vpon you bord,
And let your bed with pleaſures chaſt abound,
That fruitfull iſſue may to you afford,
Which may your foes confound,
And make your ioyes redound,
Vpon your Brydale day, which is not long:
Sweete *Themmes* run ſoftlie, till I end my Song.

So ended ſhe; and all the reſt around
To her redoubled that her vnderſong,
Which ſaid, their bridale daye ſhould not be long.
And gentle Eccho from the neighbour ground,
Their accents did reſound?
So forth, thoſe ioyous Birdes did paſſe along,
Adowne the Lee, that to them murmurde low,
As he would ſpeake, but that he lackt a tong
Yeat did by ſignes his glad affection ſhow,
Making his ſtreame run ſlow.
And all the foule which in his flood did dwell
Gan flock about theſe twaine, that did excell
The reſt, ſo far, as *Cynthia* doth ſhend
The leſſer ſtarres. So they enranged well,
Did on thoſe two attend,
And their beſt ſeruice lend,
Againſt their wedding day, which was not long:
Sweete *Themmes* run ſoftly, till I end my ſong.

Prothalamion.

At length they all to mery *London* came,
To mery London, my moſt kyndly Nurſe,
That to me gaue, this Lifes firſt natiue ſourſe:
Though from another place I take my name,
An houſe of auncient fame.
There when they came, whereas thoſe bricky towres,
The which on *T'hemmes* brode aged backe doe ryde,
Where now the ſtudious Lawyers haue their bowers
There whylome wont the Templer Knights to byde,
Till they decayd through pride:
Next whereunto there ſtandes a ſtately place,
Where oft I gayned giftes and goodly grace
Of that great Lord, which therein wont to dwell,
Whoſe want too well, now feeles my freendles caſe:
But Ah here fits not well
Olde woes but ioyes to tell
Againſt the bridale daye which is not long:
Sweete *Themmes* runne ſoftly till I end my Song.

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Yet therein now doth lodge a noble Peer,
Great *Englands* glory and the Worlds wide wonder,
Whoſe dreadfull name, late through all *Spaine* did thunder.
And *Hercules* two pillors ſtanding neere,
Did make to quake and feare:
Faire branch of Honor, flower of Cheualrie,
That filleſt *England* with thy triumphes fame,
Ioy haue thou of thy noble victorie,
And endleſſe happineſſe of thine owne name
That promiſeth the ſame:
That through thy proweſſe and victorious armes,
Thy country may be freed from forraine harmes:
And great *Eliſaes* glorious name may ring
Through al the world, fil'd with thy wide Alarmes,
Which ſome braue muſe may ſing
To ages following,
Vpon the Brydale day, which is not long:
Sweete *Themmes* runne ſoftly till I end my Song.

Prothalamion.

From thoſe high Towers, this noble Lord iſſuing,
Like Radiant *Heſper* when his golden hayre
In th'*Ocean* billowes he hath Bathed fayre,
Deſcended to the Riuers open vewing,
With a great traine enſuing.
Aboue the reſt were goodly to bee ſeene
Two gentle Knights of louely face and feature
Beſeeming well the bower of anie Queene,
With gifts of wit and ornaments of nature,
Fit for ſo goodly ſtature:
That like the twins of *Ioue* they ſeem'd in ſight,
Which decke the Bauldricke of the Heauens bright,
They two forth pacing to the Riuers ſide,
Receiued thoſe two faire Brides, their Loues delight,
Which at th'appointed tyde,
Each one did make his Bryde,
Againſt their Brydale day, which is not long:
Sweete *Themmes* runne ſoftly, till I end my Song.

FINIS.